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**Mauro Covacich and *The Humiliation of the Stars*.**

In 2011 the Italian writer Mauro Covacich finished a pentalogy which comprises four novels (Covacich 2003, 2005, 2008, 2011) and a video-performance (Covacich 2009). The pentalogy is based on a key concept, “the humiliation of the stars”, a cosmological theory (Falcon 2001) based on ancient philosophy.

In Covacich’s 2nd and 3rd novel (2005, 2008) this concept is artistically expressed through a performance by a character who runs a marathon (on a treadmill) connected to sensors that collect biometric data which are then projected on a wall.

The audience of the performance observes the performer's run, his physical transformation and its quantification; all those elements express the fact that during his existence man experiences the frustration of his desire for perfection and finds himself humiliated by physicality. Therefore the humiliation of the stars is assumed as metaphor for human failure: “- it is humiliating – being subjected to affection is always humiliating – however, there’s no escape from this humiliation. / - According to the ancient Greeks, even perfect entities like the stars eternally run around the One simply for the love of its light. / - Every being is marked by a different level of imperfection. At the end of this journey [the marathon] I won’t be less imperfect, I will only be more tired, and thinner than before.” (Covacich 2009)

In 2009 the author himself physically realizes that very same performance: he gives his own body to the character and achieves an epiphany for the fictional performance. The resulting video is a recorded live and technologically mediated performance (Auslander 2008), as well as a collaborative art (Hines 1991), part of a multimodal pentalogy (Page 2010).

The paper intends to explore the polyptychal structure which creates a path from literary text to video performance (“video literature”: Covacich 2009) and then back to literary text; secondly the materiality of performances, which express the need for a physical representation of the metaphysical artistic concept; thirdly the sacred metaphysical search, linked to the materiality of art (the performance is defined by the author as a collective rite and part of a project for the apocalypse).